

Read to Me

A newsletter for families and others who care about the future of young people.

Volume 2, Issue 3

Summer 2008

Special Points of Interest in this newsletter:

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- Learning on the Go - In the Car, On a Walk and At the Park
- Wild About Reading - coming to a park near you!!
- Bubble Recipes



United Way
of Southwest Minnesota

Join us for a **WILD ABOUT READING** event this summer!

This summer United Way volunteers will bring their favorite Imagination Library books, related activities and music to a location near you. **The schedule is printed inside.**

Plan to come to one of these community locations and join the fun that is especially planned for preschool children.

Childcare providers are encouraged to bring the children in their care. They will be eligible for door prizes.

Listen to KMHL/KKCK radio for weather related cancellation information.



Help Assess the Importance of Imagination Library

You are receiving the *Read to Me* newsletter because your family has a child or children enrolled in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program that is sponsored locally by donors to United Way of Southwest Minnesota. There are currently 2330 children from this area who receive a book each and every month.

We need your help! We want to learn more about what you think of Imagination Library and if you believe that it has helped you read more to your children. A brief survey is enclosed. Please send it back to United Way of Southwest Minnesota OR you can go to our webpage (www.unitedwayswmn.org) and follow the link to an online survey form. All responses will be anonymous. Your help with this assessment is greatly appreciated.

United Way of Southwest Minnesota became the local sponsor of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program in August 2005 to help develop school readiness and literacy skills in young children. To enroll in Imagination Library, a child must be between the ages of birth to five years old. The child needs to live within this area (defined by the area served by the following school districts: Balaton, Canby, Lake Benton, Lakeview, Lincoln HI, Lynd, Marshall, Milroy, Minneota, Murray County Central, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, Tracy, Walnut Grove/Westbrook, Yellow Medicine East. Private or charter schools are included.)

Imagination Library books are free to families. The only 'catch' is that parents need to take time to read out loud to their child. It sounds almost too simple to be true, but by reading regularly with your

children during their preschool years, you are giving them the biggest boost toward a successful education that they will ever get.

Registration: Parents or guardians can enroll their child (or children) under five years of age online (www.unitedwayswmn.org) or by submitting a short registration form to United Way of Southwest Minnesota. It is important to promptly notify United Way if your address changes.



The local cost of the program is \$30 per child per year. This is the actual cost of the 12 books plus bulk library rate postage. **There is no charge or fee or donation required or expected for enrollment.**

Please keep your address current with United Way of Southwest Minnesota



Imagination Library books are mailed out at bulk library rates and **can not be forwarded** by the post office.

Call us (507-929-2273) or e-mail us (unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org) right away if your address changes. Even though our office changes the database immediately upon notification, it takes 6-8 weeks for address changes to go into effect at the publisher.

Learning on the Go

Summer is a great time for being “on the go.” Following are some ideas to use to “learn on the go” as you’re out and about this summer!

In the Car

Connect: Rather than finding toys to amuse and distract your child, use driving time to connect and enjoy being together.

Watch and listen: What interests your child on car trips? Is it looking for signs that you are almost home or is it talking while you are together? Is it repeating new or silly words or sounds? Is it saying nursery rhymes, singing or watching for when the traffic lights change?



Extend:

For your baby: Use car travel as a time to sing. Play a tape or CD or sing songs you know or love. You can also make up songs about what you are seeing along the road or sing along with the radio. Singing about everyday activities helps children enjoy the sounds of language, and helps babies begin to associate words with good experiences. Singing also creates a sense of togetherness.

For your toddler: If your toddler likes trucks, look for trucks as you drive along and see who can yell out “truck” first. Or listen to what your toddler says and repeat their words, adding new words or rhyming with words they say. These games help children learn to watch carefully and to categorize.

For your preschooler: Use car time to talk about your child’s day. Ask specific questions (Did you eat a cheese sandwich?) rather than general ones (“How was your day?”) because they are easier for young children to answer. Help your child talk about past experiences to enhance memory.

Talk with your child about where you are going in the future (“we are going to the market on the way home”) to help him or her develop thinking and planning skills.

On a Walk

Connect: Taking a walk is good exercise for you and your child, plus it can also be a special time together. Focus on the present moment and being with your child, not on all the things you have to do when you get back.



Watch and listen: Look at the walk through your child’s eyes. How might a bug or a big crack in the sidewalk look to your child? What sounds do cars or birds make? Is the sun shining? Is it cloudy, warm or cold?

Extend:

For your baby: Name things that your baby looks at or is interested in - from street and business signs, to animals, flowers, bugs, cars, trucks, people or other sights.

Take time to let your baby watch things until his or her interest shifts. Notice how intently your baby studies things.

For your toddler: If your toddler likes to run and jump and practice moving around, make games of doing this.

Help your child learn to be safe by stopping at corners and driveways and showing him or her how to look both ways for cars.

For your preschooler: Ask questions about what you see on your walk that seems to interest your child. These questions can include the past, present and future. For example, if you and your preschooler see a dog, ask if he or she remembers seeing that dog before, what the dog is doing, or what they think the dog might do if the dog were bigger or smaller, faster or slower.

Make up rhymes or sing marches as you walk. Try walking and singing or chanting fast, then slow.

At the Park

Connect: Being in the park can be a time that is restorative, both for you and for your child. It is also a time for you and your child to play and be physically active.

Watch and listen: What does your child like about being in the park? Is it nature, looking at flowers, or watching the autumn leaves tumble to the ground? Is it the activities, the swings or jungle gyms? Is it the other children? Is it all of the above?

Extend:

For your baby: Notice what delights your child at the park and give your child more of those experiences, whether it is swinging on a baby swing, tossing piles of leaves or sitting in the sand box. Put words to these experiences or make up a song: “What did you do in the park today, dear little girl of mine? I saw another baby in the park today, mama dear mama of mine...”



For your toddler: Talk about what your child wants to do at the park and then make a point of doing that. Then talk about what you did on the way

home. This helps your child begin to make choices and plan ahead.

Let your child collect little rocks, leaves or other natural things that fascinate him or her. Sorting helps your child learn to form categories, by seeing the differences and similarities between objects. Bring along containers for scooping and pouring sand.

For your preschooler: Make plans to meet other friends at the park and discuss those plans in advance. Do you want to meet at the swings or at the climber?

If your child likes flowers, talk about their colors and sizes, count them, or ask questions about all the things you could make with them. Or stop to watch a bug or a dog and talk about what you saw later.

These tips were developed for Born Learning by Mind in the Making, a project of the Families and Work Institute and New Screen Concepts. Born Learning (<http://www.bornlearning.org>) is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children.

Wild About Reading

Coming to a location near you
this summer. Please join us!



<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>June</u>		
Tuesday, June 10	Marshall	Independence Park
Thursday, June 12	Minneota	Riverside Park
Tuesday, June 17	Wood Lake	Freedom Park
Thursday, June 19	Cottonwood	City Park
Tuesday, June 24	Echo	Lions Park
Wednesday, June 25	Hanley Falls	Centennial Park (Softball Complex)
<u>July</u>		
Tuesday, July 8	Clarkfield	Valhalla Park
Thursday, July 10	Canby	Central Park
Tuesday, July 15	Hendricks	Veterans' Memorial Park
Thursday, July 17	Ivanhoe	East Side Park
Tuesday, July 22	Marshall	Justice Park
Thursday, July 24	Milroy	Milroy City Park
Tuesday, July 29	Tracy	Sebastian Park
Thursday, July 31	Tyler	Swimming Pool Park
<u>August</u>		
Tuesday, August 5	Lake Benton	Westside Field Park
Wednesday, August 6	Marshall	Freedom Park

Listen to KMHL/KKCK Radio for weather related cancellations of these events!

Featuring music, reading, activities, animal crackers.

Door prizes of children's books will be given to childcare providers who attend with the children in their care.



United Way
of Southwest Minnesota

9:30—10:15 a.m. at all locations



United Way of Southwest Minnesota

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This is a special newsletter for families who are enrolled in Imagination Library.



Summer Fun with Bubbles

Bubble Recipes

Basic Bubbles

2 Tbsp dish soap
1 cup water

Sweet Bubbles

NOTE: *Do not use this recipe if you have bees or wasps in your yard*

1 Tbsp corn syrup
2 Tbsp dish soap
1 cup water

Magic Bubbles

1 Tbsp glycerin (you can find this in most drug stores)
2 Tbsp dish soap
9 oz water



Bubble Wands

- A 12 inch piece of coat hanger with 10 inch piece of string tied in a loop on one end.
- Purchase fly swatters for the children to use as bubble wands. Even the toddlers have great success making millions of bubbles.
- Consider using plastic cookie cutters to blow bubbles. For example if your child is fascinated with Count Von Count on Sesame Street, try using big and small numbers.

United Way of Southwest Minnesota is an independent, local organization working to create lasting changes in people's lives and the communities in Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Yellow Medicine and western Redwood Counties of Minnesota.

Learn more about United Way of Southwest Minnesota at www.unitedwayswmn.org
While you're there, sign up for our free e-newsletter

**NEW: Register for Imagination Library online at www.unitedwayswmn.org!
Also on our web page is the Parent Tool Kit - check it out!**